MINUTES of the Meeting of the Working Committee 1972 UTRECHT

Commission on Faith and Order

Faith and Order Paper No. 65

C O M M I S S I O N O N F A I T H A N D O R D E R

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
WORKING COMMITTEE

held at
the Jaarbeurs Congress Centre, Utrecht
August 3-8, 1972

Paper No. 65

World Council of Churches
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER
Geneva, 1972

C O N T E N T S

WORKING COMMITTEE MINUTES

The first session of the Working Committee was held at 7.00 p.m. on Thursday, 3 August 1972, at the Jaarbeurs Congress Centre, Utrecht, Holland.

ATTENDANCE

The following were present:

Officers:
Dean J.R. NELSON, Chairman of the Working Committee
Prof. J. MEYENDORFF, Chairman of the Commission
Miss C. HOWARD, Vice-Chairman of the Commission
Dom E. LANNE OSB, Vice-Chairman of the Commission
Prof. E. NACPIL, Vice-Chairman of the Commission

Members:
Prof. J. DESCHNER
Dr. E. FLESSEMAN-VAN LEER
Dr. H. FLOTTORP
Bishop J.A. JOHNSON
Prof. W.H. LAZARETH
Dr. B. LESKO
Prof. J. MEDINA
The Rt.Rev. L. NEWBIGIN
The Rev. S. NOMENYO
The Rev.Prof. J.K.S. REID
Principal W.M.S. WEST
Prof. H.-H. WOLF

Substitute:
Archbishop Basile KRIVOCHEINE (for Prof. L. VORONOV)

Guests:
Prof. H. BERKHOF (part-time)
Dr. E.C. BLAKE (part-time)
Dr. P.A. CROW Jr.
The Rev. J. LEAKE
Dr. P.A. POTTER (part-time)
Bishop K. SARKISSIAN (part-time)
Dr. W.A. VISSER'T HOOFT (part-time)
Sister A.P. WARE SL
Prof. B. WEBER (part-time)

Staff:
Archpriest V. BOROVOY
Dr. G.F. MOEDE (part-time)
Dr. K. RAISER
Dr. L. VISCHER

Interpreters:
Mr. Michel HOURST
Miss B. MALLET

Minute Secretary: Miss V. CANT

Conference Secretary: Mrs. R. SBEGHEN

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

The Rev. E.A. ADEGBOLA
Prof. S. AGOURIDES
The Rev. I. BATISTA
Prof. N. CHITESCU
Metropolitan CHRYSOSTOMOS of Myra
The Rev. J. GATU
The Rev.Dr. K. KOYAMA
Prof. D. MATHERS
Prof. J. MBITI
Prof. McCAUGHEY
Prof. V.C. SAMUEL
Prof. J. SMOLIK

OPENING ACTIONS

The meeting was opened with prayer led by the Chairman, Dean NELSON.

In a brief speech of welcome to the members the Chairman said that this was the first occasion on which the Working Committee had met in the Netherlands and expressed the pleasure felt by everybody at this opportunity of meeting in Utrecht with its strong connection with the early days of the ecumenical movement.

The minutes of meetings of the Working Committee and the minutes of the Faith and Order Commission in Louvain in 1971 (Faith and Order Paper No. 60) were formally APPROVED.

A tentative programme for the meeting was adopted.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON THE YEAR 1971/72

The Chairman drew attention to the report of the Secretariat for the years 1971/72, copies of which had been circulated, and thanked the Director and other members of staff for the on-going work which this represented. Dr VISCHER said that the year under review had been a difficult one, partly due to his own absence on study leave and partly to the serious illness of Dr. Moede. The report was intended not only to put on record what had been done during the past year but also to serve as a basis for consideration of future plans.

The Committee entered into a detailed discussion of the various sections of the report. In the following the relevant passages are quoted, even when the Committee did not take any specific action.

(a) Follow-up of Louvain Meeting

"A great effort has been made to publish the proceedings and results of the meeting. The main documents have been printed in the three official languages: English, French (special issue of the journal

ISTINA) and German (Beiheft of the OKUMENISCHE RUNDSCHAU). The complete set of documents has been published also in Italian (Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna). Some documents (the address by Professor John Meyendorff etc.) have been published in THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW (January 1972) and in German in the OKUMENISCHE RUNDSCHAU (April 1972). Material relating to the work in the Sections has appeared or will appear in various journals: Section I in VERS L'UNITE CHRETIENNE (November 1971), Section IV in STUDY ENCOUNTER 17 and Section V in ONE IN CHRIST (some time during the summer) and in German in UNA SANCTA (October 1971).

Some theologians were invited to attend the meeting in Louvain with a view to publishing a book interpreting the debates to a wider audience. This 'panel of writers' has been productive. The following have published or are soon going to publish volumes or at least extensive articles on the meeting: Christos Yannaras (Greek), Avery Dulles (English), Enrico Chiavacci (Italian) and Ernst Lange (German).

In addition, many members of the Commission have written articles. When the official volumes came out, about 150 persons were asked to review them. The response to this request was quite encouraging.

Free copies of the report were sent to the member churches and national councils affiliated with the World Council of Churches, to the members of the Faith and Order Commission and of the WCC Central Committee. Through the good offices of the Ecumenical Commission of the Belgian Episcopal Conference copies were sent to all Episcopal Conferences of the Roman Catholic Church.

The WCC Executive Committee heard a report on the meeting. It showed special interest in the statement on 'Conciliarity and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement' and decided to make this subject the main theme of the Central Committee in summer 1972. It also decided to send officially to all member churches the two consensus statements on Baptism and on the Eucharist. Several churches have already replied. Most answers concern the statement on Baptism; the major criticism points to the need to take up the question of the mode of baptism (immersion, sprinkling etc.).

The Louvain meeting was also reviewed by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches."

In the ensuing discussion Bishop JOHNSON expressed concern that there was no sufficient reference to the emergence of black theology: Faith and Order could not afford to ignore this development. The Chairman assured him that it had by no means been overlooked at Louvain, and Dr VISCHER suggested that this would be one of the issues arising in the discussion of the study on the Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind. Dr LESKO said that it had been easier to awaken interest in Faith and Order concerns in Latin America since Louvain. He hoped it might now be possible to encourage the formation of regional study groups. The publication of the consensus texts on Baptism and the Eucharist in Spanish had been a great encouragement. Dr VISCHER said that thanks were owed to Fr Medina for this translation. Bishop NEWBIGIN said that while there had been no official church reaction in India a number of positive articles had appeared

in the press. Dr FLESSEMAN-VAN LEER had found that the reports on conciliarity and the authority of the Bible had evoked most attention in the Netherlands. Miss HOWARD said she felt that the criticism of the methodology used at Louvain had arisen, at least in part, from the explosive quality of some of the issues discussed. Fr MEDINA thought the work of Faith and Order should be more concentrated if it was to be followed up effectively. It was said that there was a tension between theology and the Church as though theologians were outside the Church. Dom LANNE felt that among the topics discussed at Louvain the conciliarity issue had raised a good deal of interest which should be followed up. Bishop NEWBIGIN wondered whether this subject could be followed up in Central Committee. Dr VISCHER said the statements on Baptism and the Eucharist had been sent to all the churches and comments received showed that at least a number were taking them seriously. The statement on Conciliarity had been discussed by the WCC Executive Committee at its meeting last February and it had been agreed that this should form the basis of the main theme "Committed to Fellowship" at the Central Committee meeting in Utrecht. Two members of the Faith and Order Commission - Bishop Karekin Sarkissian and Professor Jürgen Moltmann - had been invited to present papers on the theme to the plenary of the meeting.

[Later a report on the Louvain meeting and plans for the future work of the Faith and Order Commission were discussed by the Unit I Committee (August 8-11) and the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (August 12-23). The Central Committee gave special attention to the outline of the planned study "Giving Account of the Hope that is in us" as it had been worked out by the Faith and Order Working Committee (see Appendix I). It approved the mandate decided upon by the Faith and Order Commission at Louvain (cf. Conspectus of Studies, Louvain report. p. 239ff.). The full text of the resolution adopted by the Central Committee is to be found at the end of these minutes (Appendix II). The theme "Committed to Fellowship" provoked a lively debate in the Central Committee and it was decided to summarize the findings of the discussion in a letter to be addressed to the member churches of the World Council of Churches (Appendix III).]

(b) Survey of Bilateral Conversations Among World Confessional Families

"At its annual meeting in 1970, the Conference of Secretaries of World Confessional Families recommended that a survey of bilateral conversations be carried out, and the Faith and Order Commission was asked to provide the administrative framework for this study. Professor Nils Ehrenström and Dr Günther Gassmann agreed to work on this project. A first draft of their survey was presented to the Commission at its meeting in Louvain and later to the Annual Conference of Secretaries of World Confessional Families in 1971. In the light of comments arising from both meetings, a revised and expanded final version was produced which is now available in printed form under the title 'Confessions in Dialogue' (Faith and Order Paper No. 63)."

Dr VISCHER said that this publication represented an important contribution to the study on "Concepts of Unity and Models of Union". In the ensuing discussion. which touched on both bilateral and multi-lateral conversations, some consideration was given to possible next steps. The general feeling was that what was

primarily required was an evaluation of the situation and some clarification of the goal.

(c) Lutheran-Reformed Conversations

"These conversations between Lutheran, Reformed and United churches in Europe which have been held for many years under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Commission on Faith and Order have recently reached tangible results which may have far-reaching significance. In September 1971, 45 delegates representing more than 60 Lutheran, Reformed and United churches in Europe met at Leuenberg (near Basle, Switzerland) for a 'pre-assembly'. They drafted and adopted a doctrinal agreement (concordia) which formulates the understanding of the Gospel commonly shared by these churches and declares that the condemnations issued mainly during the 16th century are no longer applicable to the present doctrine of the respective partner. On this basis full communion including pulpit and altar fellowship (Kirchengemeinschaft) could be established between the churches involved.

The document was sent to more than 80 Lutheran, Reformed and United churches in Europe in October 1971, requesting them to reply to the proposal by March 1973. The responses of the churches will be examined by the continuation committee elected by the pre-assembly which is authorized to take the necessary steps for preparing a final text.

The draft agreement is presently being discussed by many synods and church councils. In general, it has been received very positively and has given rise to wide-spread debate."

(d) Unofficial Conversations between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Theologians

"In the past years the Faith and Order Commission has given financial and administrative assistance to unofficial meetings between theologians of the two Orthodox traditions. At the end of last year, the report on the two meetings in Geneva (1970) and Addis Ababa (1971) has been published in THE GREEK ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, and the Secretariat is at present working on a volume containing a number of essays which are relevant for this dialogue. For the time being, no further unofficial meeting is envisaged. The Eastern Orthodox Commission to prepare for the official dialogue has met in August 1971 in Addis Ababa and it is hoped that official conversations will be opened by the two families."

The Working Committee authorized the staff to make its services available for a continuation of these conversations, should it be requested to do so by the partners involved.

(e) Church Union Negotiations

A survey of Church Union Negotiations covering the period 1969/71 has been published (THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW. July 1972) (Faith and Order Paper No. 64). The Committee asked that its appreciation be expressed to Mr Robbins Strong for his work in preparing the survey for publication.

(f) Seventh-Day Adventist Movement

"As in past years, a two-day consultation was held with representatives of the Seventh-Day Adventist movement (November 1971). This time the discussion centered on the question of the Church's political and social responsibility. Though the divergence of views was rather obvious, a new degree of mutual understanding was reached. The main points of the discussion were summarized in a short paper (published in the April 1972 issue of THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW; Faith and Order Paper No. 62). The SDA delegation expressed its interest in the continuation of the conversations. The next meeting is scheduled for November 22-24, 1972, and the following theme has been chosen 'The Church, its nature and its mission'. In addition, however, time will be reserved for a thorough discussion of our future relations. Is there much point in continuing indefinitely the series of consultations? Is it not possible to reach another level of relationship? Obviously, the SDA Church is not ready to join the World Council of Churches. But could contacts not be expanded? These questions have been discussed at a recent meeting with several responsible SDA representatives (May 9). The following plans were made: (i) the summaries of the discussions held so far should be assembled in a 'dossier' and made available to a wider public (especially to national councils and to SDA unions); (ii) for the two coming years the emphasis should be placed on contacts at the national level; (iii) a symposium should be jointly prepared, possibly with the title 'The Church and its mission'."

The Committee noted the report on consultations with representatives of the Seventh-Day Adventist Movement. It was agreed that the staff be encouraged to continue these contacts in accordance with the plans outlined.

(g) Ecumenical Exercises

"A few years ago, the Secretariat published under the title 'An Ecumenical Exercise' a description of four non-member churches: Seventh-Day Adventists, Pentecostals in Europe, Southern Baptists, and Kimbanguists. These descriptions had been written in close contact with the churches concerned with the aim that they should be able to recognize themselves fully in the formulations used. This series has been continued. Together with the Louvain report all members of the Commission have received a copy of Ecumenical Exercise II, published in the July 1971 issue of THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW which deals with the following churches: The Church of God, the Russian Old Ritualists, the Church of the Nazarene; Ecumenical Exercise III has recently appeared (April 1972 issue of THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW), and the churches described are: The Church of the Lord (Aladura), the African Brotherhood Church, and Assemblies of Brethren. These three publications have made possible many valuable contacts."

(h) Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The material for the Week of Prayer 1973 under the theme "Lord, teach us to pray!" was distributed. The Committee also had before it the report on the survey regarding the observance of the Week of Prayer conducted under the auspices of the Joint Working Group.

Dr RAISER spoke briefly of the reasons that had led to the proposal that in the next period the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity should be prepared by local groups rather than, as at present, by an international group drawn mainly from the European constituency. In 1974 it was hoped that this preparatory work might be done by groups working in Uganda. The material for the Week of Prayer would be disseminated from Rome and Geneva as at present. National councils and churches would be encouraged to adapt the basic material to the needs of their own particular situation. This new process of preparation would take longer than the former one. It was envisaged that preparation would need to start one-and-a-half years before the date for which it was intended.

Points made during the discussion included the following: (1) Prayer for unity should not be confined to one particular day of the year but should be a continuing part of the Church's liturgical worship. (2) A variety of material might be prepared which could be used over and over again by small groups or in the congregations. (3) Thought should be given to the possibility of preparing a simple prayer for unity which might be incorporated into the liturgies in common use, or learned by heart to be said repeatedly.

It was AGREED that the following proposals put forward by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches be adopted:

(a) that in the next period the Week of Prayer be prepared locally so that each year ecumenical bodies in one particular country would assume the responsibility for this task. In sending out this material the two secretariats in Geneva and Rome should take particular care to distinguish between generally applicable elements (e.g. theme, readings, etc.) and those parts which have to be re-adapted to the individual situation;

(b) that, appreciating the need for ecumenical information in the context of the celebration of the Week of Prayer, the respective local preparatory groups be invited to collect examples of items of information relevant to their situation which would stimulate similar endeavours in other places;

(c) that the terminology be changed to "Prayer for Unity" in order to underline the fact that this prayer continues and should continue throughout the year.

The Director was asked to convey the thanks of the Working Committee to Fr Jean de la Croix who had prepared the report on the survey which had been the basis for the proposals of the Joint Working Group.

(i) <u>Cantate Domino</u>

"Following a resolution by the Uppsala Assembly, the Faith and Order Commission was authorised to initiate the preparation of a new edition of Cantate Domino. A small editorial board was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Erik Routley as chief editor. From October 1970 to April 1972, Miss Margot Toplis has been working as full-time editoral assistant of the project. Successively, six

drafts of the book were prepared, some of which have been circulated among individuals and institutions for critical comment and suggestions. This process led to the selection of 200 hymns for final inclusion into the new Cantate Domino with some 30 hymns still to be definitely decided upon. Several panels of translators have been formed for translation into English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. All translations are expected to be in the hands of the editors by October 1972."

Dr RAISER said it was the intention to make the book as widely representative as possible of the hymnology of the whole Christian community. No definite date for publication had yet been fixed and it was not clear whether the necessary finance would be forthcoming.

(j) Finance

Dr VISCHER said that the financial position was not now quite so serious as had been envisaged at the time the report now before the Committee had been prepared, and there was no immediate threat of cutting staff and programme of the Commission. Two substantial contributions to the Programme Project Fund had been received. The gift from Pope Paul VI requires special mention; it was given as an expression of the interest the Holy See is taking in the work of the Faith and Order Commission. The Working Committee took note of the expression of thanks which had been conveyed to the Holy See.

It was also reported that out of the funds available for the Louvain meeting of the Commission SwFr 30.000 had not been used, and put into the reserve for future meetings. This positive report should not lead to the hasty conclusion that there will be no financial problems in the coming years. It simply means that no immediate reduction of programme is required.

Dr FLESSEMAN-VAN LEER raised the question of the lavish accommodation provided for World Council meetings; she felt that this gave an unfortunate impression and asked whether her concern could be brought to the attention of those responsible for the arrangements. Her uneasiness was shared by other members of the Committee. The General Secretary said it was not the choice of the World Council itself but in the matter of accommodation for these meetings the Council was in the hands of the host churches. The matter had already been raised in meetings of the Executive Committee and he would see that the concern voiced by the Working Committee was again brought to their attention. After some further discussion Bishop NEWBIGIN was asked to draft a minute expressing the Committee's concern for transmission to the officers. At a later session this was presented and ADOPTED as follows:

> The Working Committee wishes to share with the Officers of Central Committee its concern about the implications of the style in which we live during our ecumenical meetings. We recognize and greatly appreciate the desire of our host churches to make our stay as comfortable as possible. We also recognize the problems which have to be solved concerning the practical arrangements for a series of large meetings. At the same time we feel that when, as in our present meeting, the style in which

we are invited to live identifies us with a very small minority of the wealthiest groups in the world our witness is gravely compromised. This seems to us to be so serious as to require the attention of the Central Committee in planning future meetings and of the churches which desire to act as hosts for such meetings.

(k) Future Meetings

Dr VISCHER said that the next meeting of the Commission was scheduled to take place in 1974. The location had still to be decided but it was hoped it might be held in Africa, possible meeting places that had been mentioned being Uganda or Cameroun. The Rev. Seth NOMENYO, in warmly welcoming the proposal, said this would enable more serious attention to be paid to the question of the relation of the Gospel to African culture. Faith and Order should be seriously concerned with this, which was a question of crucial importance for the future. There was also the problem of the emergence of the 'spiritual' churches - the African churches. How far was Faith and Order sensitive to this development? The holding of a Faith and Order meeting in Africa might also help in structuring the theological study groups which were being set up in various parts of Africa and would enable African theologians to see how they could fruitfully participate in the work of the Commission. Western theology adopted piecemeal by Africa was not the answer. Jean Kotto had said at a meeting of the All Africa Conference of Churches "We do not want to encourage theology for the sake of theology. We not only have to feed giraffes; we also have to feed the smaller animals of the forest". The proposal to hold the meeting in Africa was also welcomed by other members. It was suggested that there should be opportunity for members or groups of members to make local and regional contacts, and to this end it might be that a somewhat longer meeting than usual should be envisaged.

At a later session Dr VISCHER reported on plans for meetings of the Working Committee and on the outcome of conversations regarding the location of the next Commission meeting. A tentative proposal had been made that the Working Committee might meet in the Soviet Union and it was hoped that a firm invitation would be received. After discussion the following agreements were reached:

(a) Next Meeting of the Working Committee

That should a firm invitation be received to hold the next meeting of the Working Committee in the Soviet Union this should be accepted with appreciation, the dates being 6 to 14 August 1973.

(b) Next Meeting of the Commission

That the next meeting of the Commission be held in Africa, a decision regarding the precise location to be made by the staff after further consultation with those concerned; that the date of the meeting be July 23 to August 5, 1974, subject to clearance regarding local arrangements in the place selected and to the date fixed for the 1974 meeting of the Central Committee.

It was hoped that some members would be able to spend a little time in Africa, preferably before the meeting, so that visits in the country of the meeting or in neighbouring countries could be

arranged. Dr Vischer was asked to notify members of the exact dates of the meeting as soon as these had been finally fixed.

There was some discussion of a possible programme for the Commission meeting; it was agreed that all current studies should find attention but major emphasis be placed on the study "Giving Account of the Hope that is in us".

The staff were asked to explore the possibility of holding a conference of African theologians prior to the meeting, whose work might form the basis of one of the major discussions.

It was AGREED that the report on the activities of the Secretariat during the year 1971/72 be received with an expression of appreciation of the on-going work which it represented.

STUDIES

(a) Giving Account of the Hope that is in us

Dr VISCHER said that the paper which had been circulated to members was not intended to be a working paper for the study. It represented a personal attempt to describe some of the issues involved and was intended merely to serve as a background for the discussion. It was his hope that the Committee would itself draft a statement which could be used as a working paper for the study. Already considerable interest had been expressed in various parts of the world and offers from about twenty different groups to take part in the study had been received.

Dr FLESSEMAN-VAN LEER felt that the work should be centred not around the official statements of faith of the churches but on the belief of individuals. Our first concern was the expression of our faith; the account of our hope was secondary. Confession could be not merely in words but must be expressed in our lives. How were these aspects to be dealt with in the light of the generally accepted traditions of the Church - the Christological and Trinitarian creeds? Dr VISCHER said that while the statement in I Peter was addressed to individuals or groups of individuals, it was important for the Commission to consider the faith the churches were confessing, within which individuals also confessed their faith. One of the problems of our time was that there was an increasing gap between individual accounts of our hope and what the Church says about its faith. The primary intention was an attempt to articulate the faith in contemporary terms. The confession might take many different forms. For example, it could be expressed in a prayer or through certain decisions about behaviour which conveyed a basic faith. Was it possible it might even be on the level of art? One important point was the relationship between the past and the present - the basic formulation of the creed and our explanation of it today. The importance of the Christological and Trinitarian formulation should not be minimized but the attempt to account for our hope could not be exclusively interpreted through them. Bishop JOHNSON drew attention to the use that had been made of certain passages in the first epistle of Peter in giving a Christian justification of the distinction between the master and the slave, with its consequent effect on racism. He wondered whether this invalidated it as a basis for the study.

The Chairman drew attention to the basic theological issues in relation to the study as outlined by the Louvain meeting (Report p. 240). Professor REID thought that, in preparing a statement from the Working Committee, the recommendations of the Louvain meeting (Report pp. 215-16) needed to be taken into account. These set out fairly clearly the scope and intention of the study. He asked about the relationship between the two expressions "common expression of faith" and "account of hope". Archbishop BASIL expressed the view that 'hope' and 'faith' were almost interchangeable terms. Professor NACPIL hoped the outcome would not merely be a restatement of what had already been said but that it would relate to the issues with which the Church was faced today. The question of hope in this situation became crucial to the way in which we state the faith. Fr BOROVOY said there was a difference between a statement of faith and an expression of faith. We were not in a position to formulate a common confession, but because of

our relationship to one another in the ecumenical movement we could together express our common faith. Dr LESKO shared the misgiving of others lest the term 'expression of faith' might lead to a misunderstanding of our intention. Bishop NEWBIGIN said the discussion should be carried on in the light of the study on the Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind. The use of the word 'hope' in the title was appropriate and crucial. It was not accidental that the pagan world put the question to the Church: Why do you hope?

Dr VISCHER, referring to what Bishop Johnson had said about the connotation given to the text, said he thought it necessary in this case to use the quotation as a motto, thus emphasizing its relevance to the situation with which we were faced today. The use of the formula 'accounting for the hope that is in us' enabled us to see the task in the context of actual relationships. The questions asked today called for a valid answer. This led to the conclusion that there is no one single expression of faith or one single emphasis on the reason for the hope which we want to make clear. Dr FLOTTORP said the text had not been chosen in order to bring out its meaning but as a frame of reference within which our concern could be expressed. Fr MEYENDORFF felt it helpful to have the text as a title for the study since it also spoke of the hope through which Christians transcended the social situation in which they found themselves. Professor LAZARETH said the world was looking for contemporary expressions of the eschatological hope and too close an identification with the early Church might be misleading. Bishop NEWBIGIN wondered whether there had not been a theological failure in that in the past years there had not been more investigation of what the Evanston report had called 'the lesser hope'. Eschatology had been identified with the ultimate and final hope and a vacuum had been left between 'here' and 'there'. Referring to the term 'expression of faith' Professor DESCHNER said this would be a statement of what Christians felt called upon to say about their faith in view of the contemporary situation. There was also the kind of statement which needed to be made by the Church in reply to questions about its response to the challenge of the modern world. Bishop JOHNSON summarized the main basis of what was being designated as 'black theology'. It had emerged from the need of black preachers to give an account of why they continue to hold on to the faith which for three hundred and fifty years had been the instrument of their victimization. It was an attempt to answer questions such as 'Why do you continue to deceive yourselves about the stubborn realities of the situation in America today?' 'Why do you hold on to a Jesus who is presented in the image of our oppressors?'

Professor DESCHNER drew attention to the fact that no mention was made of the fundamental question of belief in God. The problem of atheism should receive more attention. Bishop NEWBIGIN said this was an issue applicable only to some parts of the world. Dr WEST said he felt the study had developed into something more complex than had been the intention of the Louvain meeting. The feeling there had been that the time had come for a stock-taking in Faith and Order to discover what point had in fact been reached. Dr VISCHER agreed that it had been in mind to summarize agreements reached during the past years. There had, however, been a double aspect to the task, i.e. not only to summarize agreements but also to articulate the faith in the present day. Fr BOROVOY felt that while we did not ourselves doubt because we had received a revelation yet at the same time we needed an understanding

how to express the faith which was in us in the situation of new cultural revolutions and modern technological developments in the midst of which Christians lived today. Professor REID made two points (1) The frontier between church and non-church had become blurred because of an increasing uncertainty about what the Church is saying - an uncertainty focussed on credal statements which are no longer acceptable. (2) People inside the churches as well as outside were facing the challenges of technological and other developments: the difference between the 'outsider' and the 'insider' should not be over-emphasized. Fr MEYENDORFF said this was one reason for retaining the present title, or at least for keeping the reference to I Peter. Bishop SARKISSIAN, referring to I Peter, said that in the early Church accounting for the hope was taken as expressing that testimony to the faith at a time when giving an account was not simply a verbal expression but something more dynamic, a hope that was made evident even in martyrdom. There were situations today where the steadfast expression of faith through suffering was a dynamic way of 'giving an account'. Bishop BASIL felt that the creeds worked out by the Fathers witnessed to the testimony of the Holy Spirit and clearly set out our faith and the grounds of our hope. Fr MEDINA said that the Holy Spirit would know when and where to translate the expression of faith into witness which would be of some use for the world. It was not in our hands but was part of that charisma which we receive through the Holy Spirit. Dr VISCHER agreed that witness to Christ was not under our control: it was a charismatic event and very often a surprise to us. The aim of the study was not to give a recipe for efficient witness. On the other hand the articulation of faith within the community facilitated the witness, and the process of articulation strengthened individual witness. It was clear that this articulation would vary greatly as it found expression in different cultures and out of differing religious inheritances.

Fr MEYENDORFF said that no set of words and no particular event in Church history could adequately express the fullness of the Christian faith. Therefore it was important to be free from historical forms in order to gain an understanding of the full Christian truth and catholicity. Professor LAZARETH said we never found ourselves able to show fully in our lives what Christ had done for us: this is what makes the good news a scandal. The churches were a bad advertisement for that which is the real sign of our hope. The scandalous element should not be lost sight of. Professor NACPIL said we must keep in mind the dialectic between the root of the faith and the flexibility of the same faith. Dr VISCHER said that one way forward might be to try to clarify the relationship between the traditional formulations regarding God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and so on and the actual account we must give at the present time. Another question was that of the function of this study within the basic concern for the unity of the Church.

There followed a more detailed discussion. Some of the points made during this discussion were (a) that local and regional groups, including groups of professional theologians, should be invited to participate in the study and report their conclusions to the secretariat; (b) that to this end a basic paper might be prepared which would set out in fairly simple terms the underlying aim, and outline some of the questions for study; (c) that there should be some coordination with the work already being done on 'Salvation Today' in preparation for the Bangkok Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism,

with a view to the Fifth Assembly in 1975; (d) that in formulating a working paper for the study there should be a reference to the basic points enumerated in the Louvain report (pp. 215-16); (e) that it was important to engage in conversations with conservative evangelicals in both member and non-member churches not only in relation to this study but in regard to their whole relationship to the ecumenical movement.

It was agreed that the following group be asked to draft a statement on the study which might be used as an invitation to churches and groups to participate: Dr Lesko (convenor), Dr Flesseman-van Leer, Fr Meyendorff, Professor Nacpil and Bishop Newbigin. A first draft was presented at a later session and after long discussion this was referred back to the sub-committee for revision in consultation with Dr Vischer and Dr Raiser. A revised draft was later presented and again referred back for revision in the light of discussion upon it. The document as further revised was considered at the closing session of the meeting and after the adoption of one textual amendment it was proposed, seconded and AGREED -

> that the Working Committee approve the introductory paper on the study 'Giving Account of the Hope that is in us' (see appendix I) with the understanding that certain editorial changes might be necessary.

It was understood that a simpler introductory statement would be prepared by the staff for wider use, especially in congregations and spontaneous groups.

Dr VISCHER said that a small consultation on the study would be convened immediately following the Conference in Bangkok on 'Salvation Today'. Three members of the Working Committee and several members of the Commission who were participating in the conference would be available and it was hoped to engage in the consultation several other participants present for the occasion of the Bangkok Conference. The proposed dates of this consultation were January 8-12, 1973.

(b) Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind

Dr VISCHER said the paper presented to the Committee was an attempt to evaluate the discussion that had taken place on the theme 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind' and in particular the debates at the Louvain meeting of the Commission. It was the outcome of a consultation held at Torre Pellice (in May 1972) to consider the theological insights gained in this process of study. A number of emphases had emerged which it was felt should be articulated and pursued further. The document in its present form was intended to be no more than an interim presentation of what appeared to be some of the main issues. Further consideration would have to be given to the discussion in the five sections at Louvain. The present paper, edited and amended in the light of discussion, might be used as a working paper for further investigation and possibly as a basis for contributions towards a symposium.

Professor DESCHNER felt that the main value of the document lay in the second part. The first part was weaker and a good deal of terminological clarification was needed. The section dealing with

anthropological material was not strong enough and it seemed to him that this was one of the issues on which inter-disciplinary work was necessary. In the section on 'The Church as a Sign' he felt that the theme of centred diversity had not received sufficient attention. The fundamental character of the Church as sign was not clear enough. The theme of unity as centred diversity suddenly plunged into a Trinitarian approach to unity. The most valuable part of the document, in his opinion, was that contained in its concluding sections. The Church as the sign of the centred diversity of mankind was viewed as a new perspective for discussing the issues of special concern to the World Council. He recalled the mandate of the Louvain meeting regarding the study and the perspectives which had there been outlined (Report, p. 240 These should be kept in mind in pursuing the study. Several of the categories indicated at Louvain needed further exploration, e.g. the place of conflict in community, racism, the problem of the handicapped. The Working Committee should ensure that several of these pilot studies were continued with a more deliberate and narrower focus. The last pages of the document indicated areas where further study still had to be done. The Commission had a responsibility for clarifying some of the themes which had been touched upon.

Fr LANNE wondered whether it would not be wiser to concentrate on one theological aspect rather than attempt to cover the whole range of issues indicated in the paper. It might be good to concentrate on the nature of unity, centred diversity and plurality. Professor LAZARET expressed the opinion that the Christological and Trinitarian sections of the paper were not complementary but contradictory. Christologically it claimed too much and regarding the Trinity too little. Fr MEYENDORFF thought concentration should be on the question of diversity and unity in diversity. When we recognized the need for diversity in the framework of Christian unity what did we mean? Diversity must not be accepted as an end in itself. Another major problem was that of diversity in the New Testament. In the form in which this appeared in the paper it led to a kind of neo-fundamentalism. This question should receive further study in collaboration with biblical scholars.

Dr CROW said the whole question of diversity must be understood ecclesiologically. It was important to understand that diversity was one of the 'givens' of the Church. The concept of diversity was related to the vocation and the calling of the Church and much of the real mission and proclamation of the Church was tied up with its ability to relate to human diversity. He was not sure that the term centred diversity was the most helpful formulation. It seemed to suggest diversity as a focus. Whatever was said about diversity it should be made clear that it was a legitimate context and a context that had a common focus.

Bishop JOHNSON suggested that one of the basic weaknesses of American/European theology was that it was too abstract and did not touch the basic and fundamental problems facing men and women. The emerging black theology would look at the questions touched upon from an entirely different viewpoint, having in mind the concrete realities of the modern world. Black theology took as its point of departure the fact that the key to the understanding of man was Jesus of Nazareth, the oppressed one. Black theologians had much to learn from white theologians, but at the same time they felt they themselves had something to say which should be heard. Fr MEDINA pointed out that

there were certain similarities in the thinking of black theologians and that of theologians in Latin America. He felt that a distinction should be made between what could be said by the Church and what individuals could say in a concrete situation. Archbishop BASIL thought the main difficulty was not so much the division between theology and the contemporary world as that between spiritual life and speculative theology. The message of Christ took us beyond the limitations and restrictions of the human. Our Saviour by becoming man had taken on our nature - he had become the true man. Pastor NOMENYO thought the document did not emphasize sufficiently the value of the individual. It was not possible to reach unity in the Church until man achieved his own individual integrity. Professor NACPIL felt that western theology had tended to become too academic. In Asia an attempt was being made to develop a theology more closely related to what was actually happening in the human situation. In his opinion the heart of the paper lay in its reference to the Church as the sign of the unity of mankind. This should be further developed. There should, he felt, be greater emphasis on the importance of human effort in the transformation of society from inter-dependence into a community. Principal WEST referred to the section on anthropology: he had begun to read this with hope but had come to its end with disappointment. The question must be taken further and he wondered whether the Humanum studies had anything to contribute to this aspect of the subject. His main criticism of the paper was that there was over-much concentration on the second person of the Trinity. The apparent exclusion of the Holy Spirit should be corrected in any final version of the document. Miss HOWARD agreed with Professor Deschner that the Louvain perspectives should receive more attention. She thought it of particular importance that more work should be done on the question of the handicapped and the powerless.

At a later session the Chairman called on Dr Vischer to read a draft minute regarding the follow-up of the study. This text was approved and the following AGREEMENTS regarding procedure were reached:

1) That further work should be done on the paper and a revision presented to the Working Committee at its meeting in the summer of 1973.

2) That the finished product should serve a three-fold purpose:

   i) it should give an account of the theological insights gained in the course of the study on 'The Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind';

   ii) it should help the Faith and Order Commission to engage in further work on questions arising from the sections at Louvain, the paper to be made available to any groups engaged in reflection on such and similar subjects;

   iii) it might serve as the basis for editing a symposium on the theme of 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind'.

3) That the process of revision shall proceed as follows:

   i) the present draft should be revised in the light of comments, criticisms and suggestions received from those who took part in the

Torre Pellice meeting as well as in the light of the discussion in the Working Committee;

ii) the revised document should be sent to all members of the Faith and Order Commission, all members of regional study groups which participated in the study in the years preceding the Louvain meeting, and to any other people who have shown a particular interest in the study, comments to be invited by February 15, 1973;

iii) a small group should be convened in the spring of 1973 to consider the reactions received and to produce a draft for final submission to the Working Committee in the summer of 1973, the nucleus of the group to consist of members from the Working Committee and members of the group which met at Torre Pellice.

(c) Concepts of Unity and Models of Union

In drawing attention to a working paper on 'Concepts of Unity and Models of Union' prepared by Dr Crow, the Chairman reminded the Commission that Faith and Order had been born out of the desire for the reunion of the churches; this goal had never been lost sight of. In the present situation could Faith and Order exert a responsible leadership in this area? Dr VISCHER said it had been felt by the Commission that the movement towards unity would profit if the general goal could be clarified. The mandate was therefore given for a study of concepts of unity and models of union. The primary task of the Committee was to take some decision as to what steps could be taken to clarify the present situation. The Faith and Order Commission had been responsible for arranging two meetings which had brought together representatives from Church union negotiations all over the world - one at Bossey (1967), the other at Limuru (1970). Another similar meeting was to be held before the next meeting of the Commission. The Chairman then called on Dr Crow, expressing appreciation for the way he had taken over the preparation of the paper at fairly short notice.

Dr CROW said the paper was based not merely on what the ecumenical movement had to say about unity but on what the churches and local congregations had to say. It made clear that the study did not deal with hypothetical schemes but with the realities of the ecumenical situation, and that the present mood of confusion and negativism must be taken seriously. In a consideration of union and unity we must take into account not only what the negotiating committees are saying but what the denominational leadership is saying. In much of the discussion there was a tendency to set unity against union and vice versa.

Professor REID and Miss HOWARD spoke of the situation in Great Britain where negotiations between the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church, as well as between the Church of England and the Methodist Church had broken down. Dr Reid discerned a movement from bi-lateral towards multi-lateral conversations; the latter, he felt, might perhaps be the more productive. Professor LESKO did not find anything very new in the paper. He thought there should be some attempt to find out why conversations broke down before they arrived at fruition. It might be a useful exercise to list some of the non-theological factors which affected church union negotiations. Professor DESCHNER said that if he understood the situation it was

one in which, over a period of several decades, Faith and Order had moved from the position of exercising an important influence on questions of unity and church union to having an almost non-existent influence. It now took a position of neutrality. There was not simply a slowing-down in the movement towards unity but a direct resistance. The situation called for a definite strategy on the part of Faith and Order. In his opinion the study required a sharper analysis of the present malaise. As it stood at present the paper lacked any real cutting edge. Professor NACPIL thought that while the paper gave a good analysis of some of the issues, it fell short of the Louvain mandate in terms of clarification and theological evaluation of the concepts and models. Dr VISCHER said that what was done in this field had a close connection with the attempt to come to a common expression of faith and also with the study on 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind', with its emphasis on diversity and conciliarity. There was too much talk of malaise, part of which was due to an inadequate analysis of the changed situation.

Bishop JOHNSON analysed the situation of the black churches in the United States. The younger churchmen were strongly resistant to any proposal of merger with white churches; churchmen over fifty were not so dogmatic, but for this very reason had a difficult stand. Archbishop BASIL referred to a passage in the paper which spoke of union 'tactics'. He could not agree with such a reference. Union had to be achieved out of a plenitude of faith, not a minimum of faith. The Orthodox Church believed that union was a charismatic gift and men could not bring it about. Fr BOROVOY said he did not feel we should be too disheartened in the present situation of malaise. It was a necessary one, and we must look now to see where the next steps lay. We needed to come to a theological concept of unity in order to involve the Orthodox churches. He would like Faith and Order to challenge the Orthodox churches to work on the problem and produce a pan-Orthodox statement on unity.

Professor LAZARETH said that our theological differences no longer corresponded to denominational boundaries. Many of us had greater difficulty in interpreting our position to non-ecumenically-minded members of our own denomination than in reconciling different groups to each other. One of the real problems in black theology was whether blackness was a genetic, a metaphysical, a social or a psychological category; something similar might be said about some aspects of denominationalism. A question which troubled him was that of accountability. It was never clear in the World Council for whom we spoke or to whom we were accountable. The majority of those who shared in the effort to reach a common basis of belief had no organic relationship with the churches to which they belonged. The question of the responsibility and the accountability of members of the Commission was one that should be taken seriously when churches gave their approval to the nominations.

Dr MOEDE raised the following questions: (1) Should the study process not involve members of different traditions in reflecting on their own understanding of unity and their own practice? (2) Should we not make a clear comparison of different concepts and models? (3) Should we not look for pointers towards convergence which might indicate a viable ecumenical goal? (4) Do we not need some standard by which we look at ourselves as we embark on this study? Would not

the New Delhi statement represent a starting-point? (5) What should be the goal of the next few years? Could something be prepared for the next Assembly arising from the present situation? (6) In view of the issues involved would it be worthwhile to consider holding another consultation along the lines of Bossey and Limuru?

Principal WEST said he was disturbed at the widespread impression that unity involved institutional and organizational union. The present malaise was largely the result of the failure of this concept. He felt the paper needed revision since in its present form it was likely to add to the present misapprehensions about the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement. Bishop NEWBIGIN stressed the importance of Dr Moede's reference to the New Delhi statement. He strongly supported the view that this should be taken as the starting-point for the present study. Fr MEYENDORFF hoped that Fr Borovoy's challenge to the Orthodox churches would be taken up; this might be very valuable both from the point of view of the ecumenical movement and of the Orthodox churches themselves. Fr MEDINA thought we should not overemphasize the importance of models of unity and that we must stress the points that led us towards the same goal. Dr CROW said he was grateful for the helpful comments that had been made and felt the discussion gave an indication of some exciting possibilities for the continuation of the study.

The following agreements for future procedure were reached:

1) That a working paper on 'Concepts of Unity and Models of Union' should be produced, and the following persons should be asked for their help: Dr P. Crow, Dr H. Meyer and Professor E. Nacpil; Dr G. Moede to be the staff person primarily responsible for the study.

2) That the paper then be sent to selected people and groups inviting comment and criticism.

3) That the reactions of Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians be sought.

4) That in the autumn of 1973 a consultation be convened, involving participants who represent various aspects of the churches' search for unity (Bilateral conversations, union negotiations etc.).

5) That the subject be placed on the agenda of the Commission meeting in 1974 and that the possibility be considered of preparing a document for submission to the Fourth Assembly.

It was further agreed that Professor DESCHNER be asked to bring to the attention of the Central Committee in his report on Church Unity some of the concerns expressed during the discussion, with particular reference to the suggestion that member churches be asked to look again at the New Delhi statement on Unity.

(d) Ministry and Sacraments

In presenting the paper on 'Ecumenical Agreement on Ministry' Fr BOROVOY said that important work on the subject had been done by Dr Moede prior to Louvain. A study document on 'The Ordained Ministry' had been accepted at Louvain and had been commended to th staff for further development in the light of the discussion there. It was the hope that an ecumenical consensus on the ministry might be reached, similar to those on Baptism and the Eucharist (cf. Louvain Report, p. 241). Plans were in hand for a meeting from 25 to 30 September 1972 in Marseilles with the purpose to prepare a revised and completed document for submission to the Commission. The consultation would include people already engaged in the study of Ministry together with others engaged in various forms of ministry who would be able to bring new elements into the discussion. Fr Borovoy felt that if agreement could be reached on the ministry new perspectives could be opened for dealing with the problem of our divisions.

During the discussion following Fr Borovoy's presentation several members underlined the desirability of ensuring adequate participation of Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologians, and also of including representatives of black theology and securing continuity through the participation of members of the Working Committee. Fr BOROVOY said all these factors would be borne in mind. Dr VISCHER pointed out that the main function of the Marseilles consultation was to act as a drafting group to prepare a paper for circulation. He asked members of the Committee to submit names of individuals or groups to whom the document could usefully be sent.

Professor LESKO hoped the group working on the paper would take into account what the result of such an ecumenical agreement could mean for those engaged in theological education. Professor LAZARETH and others once more stressed the importance of involving members of the Commission itself in Faith and Order studies. They should be identified with the on-going work as representatives of the churches which had officially approved their election. Dr FLOTTORP hoped that conservative evangelicals might be included among those participating in the study. Dr MOEDE said that one of the questions raised by younger people in the working groups had not found its way into the report. Was the ordained ministry primarily or exclusively for the church as a gathered community or had it also an obligation to be concerned with 'mission'? Fr MEDINA said this was important and an element that should be borne in mind in pursuing the study. Professor REID thought attention should be given to both the 'separated' ministry and to ministry in its wider sense: one could not be considered without the other. Principal WEST, referring to the question of the participation of Commission members in the studies and their responsibility to the churches, said he felt some serious attention should be given to this in the light of its financial implications. Was it right that participation in Faith and Order studies should in part be dependent upon the ability of participants to 'pay their way'? Dr VISCHER appreciated the concern expressed, which was by no means a new one in its bearing on the composition of World Council working parties. He hoped that a resolution regarding participation of Commission members would be brought before a later session.

It was AGREED -

that general approval be given to the proposals outlined for the continuing work on the study on Ecumenical Agreement on Ministry.

(e) Methods of Faith and Order Study

Dr RAISER reminded the Committee that at Louvain the Commission had decided that the methods used in Faith and Order studies should be reviewed. The paper now before the meeting represented no more than the reflections of the staff and was submitted in the hope that further clarification would result. In the discussion which followed several speakers expressed appreciation for this attempt to clarify some of the methodological issues in Faith and Order work and agreement with the general thrust of the paper. Going through the paper section by section the Committee gave a number of specific suggestions with a view to an expansion, modification or revision of the text. It was finally AGREED -

1) that the paper 'Reflection on the Methods of Faith and Order Study' be revised in the light of the discussion;

2) that the document as revised be shared with the members of the Commission, together with the documents on 'Giving Account of the Hope that is in us' and 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind';

3) that the comments of other sub-units of Unit I on the paper be invited.

Following up earlier references to the involvement of members of the Commission in the study processes, it was moved by Dr LAZARETH, seconded and AGREED -

that while encouraging the Commission's continued exploration of ecumenical themes by a wide variety of competent sources, it is recommended that elected Commission members or their proposed proxies be asked first to serve as the theological participants in the major on-going study projects authorized by the Commission.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONSERVATIVE GROUPS

The question of relationships with conservative groups in all churches belonging to the World Council as well as in those outside the Council's membership arose at several occasions during the meeting. It was felt that the development of these relationships was of crucial importance both for the World Council as a whole and for the continuing work of the Faith and Order Commission. The necessity for the opening up and the maintenance of dialogue was stressed, not only with a view to furthering an understanding of what the ecumenical movement stands for but also because of the contribution which could be made to some of the Faith and Order studies by those belonging to conservative groups. The following were asked to draft a statement for consideration by the Committee: Dr Flottorp (convenor), Bishop Johnson, Dr West and Mr Leake (consultant).

Two successive drafts were presented and they gave rise to a longer discussion concerning the best way of expressing the common concern of the Committee. The substance of the discussion was summarized in the following drafted minute:

> The Working Committee is convinced that a renewed effort should be made to reach Christians who are opposed or indifferent to the World Council of Churches. If we speak of conservative groups, we do not refer exclusively to Protestants but to conservative trends among Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians. Their numbers and influence have been growing in recent years. The urgency of the task is illustrated, for instance, by difficulties in recent union negotiations, the pressure within certain churches to leave the World Council of Churches, and other similar developments. Too easily we have been talking about 'conservative evangelicals' as groups outside the ecumenical movement and have failed to give sufficient recognition to the fact that many of them are members of our churches. Too often we have taken for granted the presence among us of Orthodox representatives, and have not been sufficiently sensitive to their difficulty of making their specific contribution within the framework of the World Council of Churches.
>
> This renewed effort should in the first place be an attempt to reach a better understanding of their opposition, and to give serious consideration to the ways in which the present style and methods of work of the World Council aggravate their criticisms. The Faith and Order Commission needs to recognize its responsibility in this field. It would be inconsistent with the purpose of the ecumenical movement to pretend that the problem of conservativism does not exist. We need to discern the theological insights of these Christians, and bring them to the attention of the member churches.
>
> Some of these Christians, it must be admitted, have such strong feelings of antipathy to the World Council of Churches that it is difficult to foresee how a creative dialogue can take place. In recent years the task has been made even more difficult by new factors, e.g. the deeper involvement of the World Council of Churches and many of its member churches in social and

political concerns, the suspicion of relativism in WCC studies, and in some circles the increased contacts of the World Council of Churches with the Roman Catholic Church.

But we should resist any hasty generalisations. The reports we heard in the Working Committee indicate a great diversity of situations and some developments do not fit the stereotype images which tend to be drawn. It is important to note, for instance, that young people, committed to 'evangelical' traditions, are becoming increasingly concerned with social and political affairs; that neo-Pentecostal movements, for whom the traditional concerns of the World Council have little or no appeal, are experiencing their own ecumenical movement through common worship and experience of the Spirit, which bears little or no relation to denominational membership, etc. What have such new developments to contribute to the life of our churches?

What can be undertaken by the Faith and Order Commission? At the present stage, no large scale consultation should be planned. Instead, members of the Commission are encouraged to develop contacts according to the local situation in which they are placed and to report about the results. The Faith and Order Commission may encourage the participation of conservative groups in such studies as 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind', or 'The Account of Hope'. In our own thinking we should be guided by principles such as: How can we in Faith and Order come to understand the concerns and intentions of such groups and individuals? How can they be helped to understand our concerns? At a later stage the Working Committee may consider calling a consultation on some specific theme. This may contribute to widening and deepening the support of conservative Christians in the work of the World Council of Churches to discover more effective ways of communicating the results of the Faith and Order studies to the constituency.

Finally, the following resolutions were moved, seconded and AGREED -

(a) that the Working Committee, expresses its concern regarding relationships with conservative groups both within the member churches and in non-member churches (see also Appendix III);

(b) that the Faith and Order staff be asked to share this concern with Unit I Committee and with other sub-units of Unit I;

(c) that the matter be brought to the attention of members of the Commission on Faith and Order with a request that wherever possible conversations with such groups in their own communities be initiated;

(d) that in so far as the limitations of time permit, the staff be asked to follow up with the churches the issues arising out of the various publications under the general title 'Ecumenical Exercise';

(e) that the matter be included in the agenda for the next meeting of the Working Committee;

(f) that in nominating consultants for the next meeting of the Commission a number of competent conservative theologians be included;

(g) that there be continuing discussion with such groups as the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, etc.

[Later the matter was brought to the attention of the Unit I Committee meeting in Utrecht from August 8-11. The Unit Committee adopted the following resolution:

"The Programme Unit I Committee gives serious attention to the Christians who, because of 'conservative' theological conviction, are not in sympathy with some contemporary trends in the ecumenical movement. Whether Orthodox or Evangelical, many of these are communicants of member churches of the World Council of Churches while others belong to churches which are not members. It is evident that all Christians of whatever church or confession intend only to act in obedience to God and to confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Where clear differences concerning witness and action are evident, they must be subjected to the test of fidelity to the same apostolic Gospel. Disagreements among Christians as to the application and meaning of this test need always to be discussed by those who are desirous of 'speaking the truth in love.'

The Committee instructs the committees and staff of its sub-units to keep in mind the implications of these continuing disagreements and to maintain communication and dialogue with and between Christians who represent a diversity of perspectives and convictions on the issues with which they are obliged to deal. Further, a working group of staff should be constituted to give particular attention to this matter and report to the Committee in 1973."]

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON STRUCTURAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

Miss HOWARD presented the report of the Sub-Committee on Structural and Constitutional Questions, outlining two alternative proposals for the future structure of Faith and Order within the revised structure of the World Council of Churches adopted by the Central Committee at its meeting in Addis Ababa in 1971. Neither alternative was found fully acceptable. At a later session Miss Howard presented a third proposal. After discussion it was proposed, seconded and AGREED -

> that the following report of the Sub-Committee on Structural and Constitutional Questions be adopted as providing a basis on which by-laws governing the work of Faith and Order could be drafted for submission to the Working Committee at its meeting in August 1973.

"General considerations

The new structure proposal would take account of the following: -

1) The general guidelines of the WCC Structure report and its implementation in other sub-units, especially of Programme Unit I.

2) The importance of retaining the full confidence and participation of the members of the Faith and Order Commission and of the member churches of the World Council of Churches, as well as taking account of the attitudes of non-member churches who collaborate with the Faith and Order Commission.

3) The needs of the Faith and Order movement and the most effective development of its programme.

4) The need to clarify the particular competence and role appropriate to each part of the Faith and Order Commission.

At present, two bodies in effect act in the name of the Faith and Order Commission: the full Commission meeting every three or four years, and the smaller Working Committee meeting annually. Both need the fullest possible authority and status for their work.

When the Faith and Order Commission is governed by by-laws rather than a separate Constitution, it will be appropriate that its members be appointed by the Central Committee after the appropriate consultations (and no longer by the Assembly). It would strengthen the authority and status of the smaller body (present Working Committee), if it too were elected by the Central Committee rather than by the Commission. This would also give it added status in relation to the Programme Unit I Committee for whom it must be the effective representative of the Faith and Order Commission.

The proposal is therefore that the title Faith and Order Commission would cover both groups and that both shall possess, for their different purposes, the authority of the Commission. The primary task of the full Commission will be that of theological study, debate and appraisal. In order to make membership of the

Commission a greater reality, members shall, so far as possible, be involved in the Faith and Order work between meetings (by membership of consultation, special study groups, written consultation etc.). The smaller body (for which it is hoped some title name other than Working Committee may be found) shall be responsible for decisions on implementing the programme, for guiding the staff in the development of Faith and Order work, and for making decisions on behalf of the Commission in administrative matters and for the ongoing work. It shall represent the Commission in relation to Programme Unit I Committee. The Commission will continue the work of initiating and evaluating the programme of study.

Method of Election

1) The membership of both bodies will be elected by the Central Committee after the appropriate consultation with their own churches.

2) Both bodies may contain members of non-member churches.

3) It is suggested that the Central Committee would, in the first instance, elect the officers (Chairman and Vice-Chairmen) of the Commission and those other Commission members who would form the smaller group (i.e. the equivalent of the present Working Committee). At its first meeting, this body would prepare nominations for the Central Committee of the remaining members of the full Commission (though the Central Committee must presumably have freedom not to accept all the nominations)."

REPORT OF NOMINATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor WOLF presented the report of the Nominations Sub-Committee. According to the Constitution the Commission was entitled to a membership of 150 persons; at Uppsala 135 members were elected as it was felt wise to retain a number of vacant places. Some additio appointments had since been made but owing to resignation and death of some members the number had now fallen below 135. It was necessary for the Committee to decide whether to nominate new members now or to postpone action for the time being. After discussion of the various factors involved it was AGREED:

1) that no action be taken at the present time regarding the filling of the existing vacancies on the Commission, having in mind the following report of the Nominations Sub-Committee:

   "There are several arguments in favour of this. Members now elected and confirmed by the Central Committee would serve on the Commission only for one meeting. The whole Commission needs to be re-elected at the next Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Therefore it may be better not to fill any vacancies before the next Assembly. This would give us other advantages. Instead of new members, a somewhat larger number of consultants could be invited for the next meeting of the Commission. People with special capacities could be asked to attend the next meeting which probably will have again a main theme requiring the collaboration of specialists. In the past the Faith and Order Commission has not had enough freedom to invite special consultants. It would be a great advantage if the vacancies on the Commission could be used to enlarge the number of consultants."

2) that about 30 consultants should be invited to participate in the next meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order;

3) that in view of the discussion at the Louvain meeting, the name of one black American theologian be sought for nomination to the Commission immediately, a second nomination to be brought to the next meeting of the Working Committee;

4) that the Nominations Sub-Committee be asked to bring a further report to the next meeting of the Working Committee, including proposals regarding possible consultants for appointment to the Commission meeting in 1974.

At a later session it was AGREED -

to recommend to the Central Committee that Professor Gayraud Wilmore (United Presbyterian Church in the US) be elected to fill one of the vacancies on the Commission on Faith and Order.

CLOSING ACTIONS

On the suggestion of Dr CROW it was agreed that in sending material arising from the meeting to members of the Commission the staff be asked to draw the attention of individual members to specific study papers, requesting their comments and suggestions.

The members of the Working Committee who were also members of Unit Committee I were asked to report as seemed appropriate on the concerns which had been considered by the Working Committee.

The meeting was closed at 12.00 noon with a period of worship led by Fr Meyendorff.

APPENDIX I

"GIVING ACCOUNT OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN US"

I. An Invitation

The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches has decided to invite Christians in many countries and churches to share in an effort to say together, so far as we can, what is the faith and hope which have been given to us in Christ, the salvation of God which we confess in our worship and seek to proclaim in word and deed.

We are encouraged to make this attempt because of the experience of the past 45 years since the first Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne. During this period we have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit to draw the separated churches into fellowship. Many of the doctrinal differences which have divided the churches from one another have been seen in a new light. On many issues it has been possible to reach a wide consensus. On the basis of such consensus churches have been able to declare that the condemnations formerly passed upon each other are no longer relevant. Among the matters on which a wide consensus has been reached are Baptism, the Eucharist, and the relations of Scripture and Tradition. Progress is also being made towards a consensus on the Ministry. It now seems to the Commission that the time has come to seek together some common expression of the faith which we hold and which we try to proclaim.

(a) The progress made during the past 45 years has placed us in a situation where we cannot stay still but are bound to move forward towards a fuller statement of our common faith. In the long and arduous effort to overcome the doctrinal differences between the churches we have had to mark the stages of our progress by means of the 'statements of consensus' referred to in the previous paragraph. But these statements inevitably have a certain 'minimal' character. They represent a solid core of agreement but they are much less than the full statement of the Gospel which each of us would wish to make in proclaiming Christ before the world.

'Ecumenical theology' has thus appeared to be something less than the full Gospel. As a reaction against this, it is understandable that voices are heard in our member churches protesting against what seems to be an erosion of the fulness of the Gospel. In so far as these voices ask us to return to the past, and in so far as they ask us to abandon the effort to speak together as Christians, we have to reject them. But in so far as they remind us of our duty to give a clear and common account of our hope in Christ, we must accept their challenge. We cannot remain content with the elements of consensus already achieved, but must press on with the effort to say together, in a way that the world will understand, what is the good news given to us.

(b) "In a way that the world will understand." Our problem here is a complex one:

(i) Our world is vastly different from that in which the classical creeds and confessions of the Church were formulated. Much of their language - precious as it is to us in the Church - is meaningless or positively misleading to those outside. The Church cannot escape the obligation to seek in every new age to confess afresh, in the language of that age, its faith in Christ.

(ii) But to say this is only to touch the fringe of the problem. Within our one world there is a variety of worlds - each governed by distinct structures of thought and experience, expressed in a variety of language, culture and social order. Worlds, rituals and structures have different meanings when they are 'translated' from one world into another. All the classic forms in which the Christian faith has been expressed have been formulated within that world which developed around the Mediterranean and in Western Europe. As the Gospel has been carried into other very different cultures, such as those of Asia and Africa, it has still been expressed in the thought forms of the Western world. Very little progress has been made in seeking expressions of the Christian faith which are fully within the cultural worlds of the non-European peoples. And within the 'Western' world,the cultural, social and political situations vary enormously.

(iii) The matter is further complicated by the fact that many of us who participate in this kind of discussion live simultaneously in more than one world. The colonial expansion of the European peoples has created a situation in which the world of their language, culture and technology lays claim to be in fact 'the world'. It is with this 'world' that the peoples of other cultures have to come to terms when they move out of their own 'world'. And within the ecumenical movement, because it is also part of the secular world, the terms upon which we meet and talk together are the terms developed within the Western world. But a common witness in these terms will fail to make effective contact with the peoples of the non-Western cultures except in so far as they have become part of the Western world.

(c) It follows that what is now needed is a common effort which has two phases.

(i) A very serious effort by groups of Christians in many different situations to try to express the faith which they hold as members of the Christian Church in the terms which are intelligible and relevant to their own friends and neighbours in the places where they live. This will mean <u>both</u> a fresh effort to understand the world which is around us (and within us) - its hopes and fears, its assumptions and its doubts, its aspirations and its rejections; <u>and</u> a fresh effort to grasp the original roots of our faith, to understand in our own terms who Jesus is for us and for our world.

(ii) An equally serious effort by the Faith and Order Commission, representing as it does a considerable family of Churches, to draw their different experiences together into a coherent whole, so that we can give a credible witness to Jesus Christ, not only in each of our separate worlds, but also in the one world of which he is Lord.

II. Who Are Invited?

We have been encouraged to make this attempt by the response which it has already evoked. Already a considerable number of groups have been formed to work on the project in their own situations. The Faith and Order Working Committee is now inviting others to share in the work.

It is suggested that groups might be formed of many different kinds. We give here only a few possible examples.

(a) A group might be formed of membership of a simple parish or congregation.

(b) Better still, a group could be formed consisting of Christians in the same place from many different churches.

(c) There could be groups of Christians who work together in the same secular job.

(d) Christians concerned about some particular social issue - such as racism, or poverty or community health might try together to articulate their faith.

(e) A National Council of Churches could undertake the study as a national effort.

(f) Churches in which there are deep divisions between 'conservatives' and 'radicals' might call together groups in which the convictions of both could be shared in a common effort to "give an account of our hope".

III. How To Set To Work?

Each group will have to determine its own way of working and the form which its account will take. Each group has to come alive and no two results will probably be the same. However, it seems to us that there are certain questions which any group will sooner or later have to face.

(1) Right at the outset the group should consider the function of its account. One of its functions certainly is to be a contribution to the common work which Faith and Order is undertaking. About that aspect we will have to say more under IV. But the account of a particular group will primarily have a relevance of its own in the situation in which it is given. Therefore, the group has to be clear in its own mind why it wants to express its faith. There can be many different reasons. It may want to give an account to those outside the church who ask what Christians believe or why people today are Christians. Or the members of a group could come from different denominations and now want to express their faith together. Or the group might be concerned and disquieted by divisions and factions which run through the churches (to which we have pointed earlier). Or else, might it not also be that the group members want to think through together their faith because of their own questions and even doubts? Then the function of the account would be to clarify the belief of the

group members themselves. One could think of many more reasons why a group would want to give an account. Anyway, it seems necessary that the members should be clear in their own minds and should make their intention explicit.

The group should also ask itself to whom in the first place its account will be addressed. Are they their fellow-Christians? Are they those on the borderline of the Church? Or are they those who can only be called outsiders? What difference will it make to the nature of the account? The language used in each case will probably have tobe different, but will the content of what we want to say also have to be different?

(2) The account we give is to be anchored in the present situation. However, we cannot rest content with merely giving an analysis of it. We want to express our faith in view of our situation. But what weight do former creeds, confessions, catechisms have for this expression today? Should we try to explain what has been said in the past, in new words? Should our account today be a re-interpretation of former creeds and confessional doctrines? Do we have to say basically the same as what has been said formerly, or is our situation so different that new and other things have to be said? Would that imply that we cut ourselves off from the church before us? Here perhaps the most perplexing question lies: What weight do we attach to the present situation and what weight to the expressions of faith we have received from former times?

Our intention is to bear witness to Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday today and forever. Does this mean that there are certain affirmations which are so central that they are valid for all times and situations? If so, can we state these today in our situation? Or is every received affirmation of the Christian faith a human attempt which is valid only for its own time and place? What are the tests by which we can determine whether or not our account is truly Christian?

(3) We have stressed the fact that an account cannot be given in a vacuum. Our situation poses questions - perhaps not explicitly - which demand an answer. These questions will vary from place to place. In some places the climate is secular or explicitly atheist; in others it is religious. Each situation faces its own questions. In another place the question most sharply posed may arise from suffering or injustice. The group must ask: What are the chief questions which our situation puts to us as Christians?

The answer to this question will raise another. Some aspects of our faith and hope speak directly to our situation, others less so or not at all. Should we seek to express only the immediately relevant aspects allowing the rest to be, not denied but kept in abeyance till another time and place? Or should we try to be comprehensive in our account?

(4) The form we choose for our account will in part be determined by the answers given to the questions above. A group should make a common consensus decision here. No one form can be assumed in advance to be self-evidently right. The account could for instance be given in the form of a prayer to God or in the form of a

description of liturgical renewal. Or we might describe what we would want to teach as Christian instruction, or formulate what we consider to be indispensable for (adult) baptism or confirmation. Or else we could give an account in the form of a credal statement, or plan a series of books or pamphlets for non-Christian readers. The list is by no means exhaustive. It might be necessary and fruitful for a group to reflect on the reasons why it has chosen a particular form.

(5) The very fact that an expression of faith is a matter which commits those who give it, implies that faith cannot be expressed solely in words. It is true that all our deeds and actions - even the best ones - are ambiguous, but our deeds and actions can certainly invalidate the trustworthiness of our account. Therefore, we have to ask ourselves whether our accounting in words must not of necessity be supported by our life. Does this imply that any verbal account of our faith has to be accompanied by an account of what we have done in the past (even if that would have to be in the form of a confession of sin) and certainly by an account of what we are doing now and what we intend to do?

When the many questions which arise are listed in this way, the undertaking may well seem so forbidding that we do not dare even to start it. Often the best way to start the process of accounting may be just to plunge into the work and only afterwards reflect on what we have done. For some groups the danger may be to spend all the time in discussing preliminary questions and giving a sociological and cultural analysis of the situation. For other groups the main danger may be to rest content with a mere repetition of traditional formulae. Each group will have to be aware of its own particular temptations and will have to try to deal with equal seriousness with the contemporary situation in which it lives and with the Christian witness that should be given.

IV. What Result Do We Hope For?

It has been pointed out (I, c) that there are two phases to our work. The questions and considerations given in III are primarily relevant to the first phase, namely the account which the various groups in their own situations have to give. But how are these different accounts from all over the world to be related to one another? Here very serious questions arise to which we do not yet know the answers, and which the Faith and Order Commission must carefully consider.

(1) There is certainly no intention to try to write a new ecumenical creed comparable to the great creeds and confessions of the Church. We have no authority to do this. But should we hope to be able to draw together the statements of the different groups into some sort of common 'account of our hope'? Would this mean disregarding the variety of situations from which they came and to which they speak? Or is it the case that, because we all live in one world we all really face the same ultimate problems?

(2) Or should we give a greater weight to the variety of the accounts coming out of the variety of situations? Should our goal be to enter imaginatively into the situations of others, and learn to see the validity of the witness to Christ given in and to those situations? In the past various churches of one family have often had different confessional statements but they recognised one another and acknowledged that these statements were all expressions of the faith they had in common. Might it be possible that in a similar way the various and differing accounts could be mutually recognised as valid witnesses to Christ, given from different angles and speaking to different problems?

In that case we should have to consider the ways in which this mutual recognition could be achieved. One necessary condition would be that we should understand as fully as possible the different situations which form the background to the different accounts. It will therefore be helpful if groups which participate in this programme will send to the Faith and Order Commission not only their final 'accounts' but also their answers to the questions asked in Part III of this paper.

(3) There always remains the possibility that we cannot endorse an account given by another as a valid witness to Christ, because we consider it a false witness. It is clear that this is a very serious matter. Here a new set of questions arises which we have to think through:

(a) Who are the 'we' who recognise or do not recognise one another's accounts?

(b) What is (are) the norm(s) by which this acceptance or non-acceptance is to be made?

It is clear that we are embarking on a process whose importance and limits we cannot yet estimate. But perhaps we must simply say again that in faith and trust we plunge into the work, praying that on the way it will become clearer to us what we are doing and how, with God's help, we can do it.

APPENDIX II

ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING IN UTRECHT (AUGUST 13-23, 1972) CONCERNING THE WORK OF THE FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION

(a) That the Central Committee give approval to the mandate outlined by the Faith and Order Commission at Louvain (cf. p. 239 ff. of the Louvain report and Central Committee Document No. 10).

(b) That the Central Committee draw special attention to the study on 'Concepts of Unity and Models of Union'. The discussion of the theme 'Committed to Fellowship' and especially the report on church union, have underlined the need for this fresh effort. It may contribute to clarify further the nature of the unity the churches are called upon to achieve (see WCC Constitution III, i). The study should be pursued with a view to the Fifth Assembly in 1975.

(c) The Central Committee considered the document 'Giving an Account of the Hope that is in us', prepared by the Working Committee of the Faith and Order Commission and still subject to editorial review (see Appendix I).

The Central Committee welcomes this proposal and urges its own members as well as member churches, to participate in the project which, in its judgment meets a need felt in many churches and will give us an opportunity to fulfil our common calling of witnessing to the world. It also seems to touch upon many of the issues raised during the present sessions of this Committee.

The Central Committee emphasises the fact that the project seeks not to formulate a new ecumenical creed comparable to the great creeds and Confessions of the Church, but to articulate the faith that holds us together in the ecumenical movement, impelling us to move forward in hope.

While we cannot foresee the result or impact of such a statement, the process itself of seeking ways to formulate our common faith seems worthwhile. We particularly welcome the fact that participation is to be by groups at the most diverse levels and in varied situations and recommend that the project should be co-ordinated with and benefit from ongoing studies like that by CWME on 'Salvation Today' and that by Church and Society on 'The Future of Man', keeping in view, the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975.

APPENDIX III

COMMITTED TO FELLOWSHIP

A LETTER TO THE CHURCHES

As we have met for the third time since our election as the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, we have discussed the theme 'Committed to Fellowship' and have had a fresh experience of fellowship with one another - in our personal contacts, in coming to our decisions about the future work of the Council and in our common worship of God in Christ. We have broken through the often superficial politeness and brought into the open convictions and commitments which have distressed and shocked some. Yet, Christ's call to fellowship is stronger than all our disagreements. In the living of the ecumenical movement, new insight is given, new stimulus emerges and new perspectives are opened. This we dare to interpret as the leading of the Holy Spirit.

A Growing Fellowship

We have been encouragingly reminded of the significant progress made, despite several serious setbacks, by the majority of the negotiations underway towards Church Union. We have been shown evidence of the new climate of trust being created by the many bilateral interconfessional conversations. The steady accession of new member churches and the increasing leadership being given by Christians and churches from Asia, Africa and Latin America are providing us a new richness of fellowship. We are greatly encouraged by the consensus achieved by Faith and Order on baptism and the eucharist and by the progress made on the authority of the Bible and the doctrine of the ministry. We cannot, however, remain content with these but must press on with the effort to say together, in a way that the world will understand, the good news God has given us. Co-operation with the largest single church outside the Council, the Roman Catholic Church, has now so grown in many countries and areas of responsibility that we are impelled to take a fresh look at the patterns of our relationships.

This growth of fellowship, however provisional, reminds us of the urgency of the task to discern together the ways that will lead us to the goal of koinonia as proclaimed in the New Testament. We must ask ourselves what can be done to make the fellowship of churches, which the World Council claims to be, more complete and effective.

An Active Fellowship

Yet, our commitment is not only to be together, it is to 'fulfil our common calling'. We have begun to act together - in common service to the needy, in helping the churches to fulfil their missionary task, in common witness to men of living faiths and in solidarity with those oppressed by tyranny, war or racism. To some people in some countries, it has seemed as if the World Council of Churches has turned from being a fellowship of the churches concerned to serve the unity of the Church, into a group bringing pressure on the churches for certain social or political activities. This is not so.

The World Council of Churches today is, of course, not precisely what it was at its founding 25 years ago - what would we have learned from one another if it were? We affirm as strongly as ever that our fellowship is rooted in the one sure foundation: the victory of the cross of Christ. From that victory stem at the same time the call to a single fellowship of believers, united around the Lord's table as a sign of his love for the world and the commitment to a single family of man, living in peace and justice with one another and in responsible relation to nature. Some people speak as if these two give rise to different, even opposing, conceptions of the ecumenical movement. Against these, we are convinced in faith that a true witness to the unity of the Church contains a crucial contribution for the problems which divide mankind and that to take these human conflicts seriously provides the right context for discovering the way forward in our vocation of church unity.

A Seeking Fellowship

Many of us in our churches experience the agonising discomfort of the polarisation of opinion into two or more warring camps. Here in Utrecht we have realised that we shall not be spared the same experience in the World Council of Churches. The Programme to Combat Racism has sparked off vivid controversies. Yet over three years now we can see that, provided people study the evidence open-mindedly and are prepared to listen to one another, such controversy may serve rather than hinder the common commitment. Further, we are increasingly realising just how bound many of us are to particular traditions and particular cultures which stand in the way of genuine openness to our neighbour. We must re-examine ourselves in the knowledge of Christ's commitment to the poor and the outcast. Most difficult of all, we are becoming aware just how all-pervasive are the structures of racism and of economic oppression and thus how the struggle for justice inevitably divides us. The Church does not have to seek out where she can enter the battles of our time; they are raging through our own community.

A Council born in the tensions of a world war must now face up to tensions even more deeply rooted in centuries of injustice. There can be no easy answers. On the contrary, we have hardly begun to discover how deep the alienation runs. But, at least we can witness to our experience that there is in Christ that which binds us together despite ourselves. In witnessing, we can but press on to make full use of that fellowship for greater justice. In the first place, we must accept one another and so provide opportunity within the life of the Church for each community of mankind to develop and express its own authentic selfhood. This becomes all the more necessary because modern conditions are forcing mankind into a tight interdependence which threatens freedom and individuality. The Church's unity must allow ample space for diversity and for the kind of open, mutual confrontation and correction that we have glimpsed this week.

On the Agenda

If we are to grow yet more in this God-given fellowship, we shall have to face various demands that we can already see coming upon us:

(a) We shall have to learn to speak more openly to one another of the centre of our commitment. We all take our stand on the faith delivered to the Apostles but in our time a fully agreed formulation of this cannot be taken for granted. In this year's conference on "Salvation Today" and in the study "Giving Account of the Hope that is in us" we shall have opportunities for this kind of speaking.

At the same time, we shall have to learn again and again to set our actions in social and political spheres in relation to the action of God in Christ and not leave undefined that which is not evident.

(b) We shall have to learn to be better and more humble listeners to one another. This is necessary at various points. In inter-church conversations the ecumenical spectrum is now richer and more diverse than any one organisation can embrace. As we witness the many welcome initiatives at different levels, we must encourage all involved to heed one another and discover how the World Council of Churches can best serve the appropriate interchange. Within our member churches, we are aware of many Christians who are not in sympathy with some contemporary trends in the ecumenical movement. Such disagreements must be openly discussed in obedience to the commandment to "speak the truth in love". Listening is especially needed where the fellowship is rent apart by human tensions and where men can only affirm it in darkness. There may indeed be times when, even after listening intently to one another, we feel bound in conscience to act in ways that divide us. We can, however, only dare to do so if we trust in Him whose power can transcend these sincere divisions.

(c) We shall have to learn to comprehend what our Chairman called "the priestly ministry of liberating reconciliation and the prophetic ministry of liberating conflict". How, he asked us, "can we be at once messengers of peace in a world of strife and messengers of strife in a world of false peace" without breaking up the fellowship into the one or the other? Here in Utrecht we discovered how urgent this question is. We have not yet found the way to integrate our belief and our action.

(d) We shall have to learn to envisage more profoundly, at all levels of church life, the nature and goal of the conciliar process by which the Church has lived down the centuries and into which we seek to enter anew. The Faith and Order statement for which we asked (1) has shown us that the notion of conciliarity can serve as a useful tool to clarify what we have been struggling with here. While much in the challenge of a genuinely universal Council lies yet far ahead of us - e.g., a deeper and common understanding of how a Council is properly called and rightly constituted - we can know already that our best preparation for attaining this goal is to transform the life of our local congregations, synods and assemblies. There it is that we must take steps towards visible unity by which our ecumenical commitments may penetrate ever more

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(1) "Conciliarity and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement", in: Faith and Order, Louvain, 1971, pp. 225-229.

deeply into our worship, our decision-making and our attitudes one another, so that in the end the World Council of Churches may transcend the limitations we now experience.

In Conclusion

The greatest test of our commitment lies in the extent to which we implement in our churches the agreements reached in our fellowship. We now have before us in the preparation of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, a major opportunity to do that, as well as to interpret into the world context the discoveries of each of our churches. Within the Church of Christ, we draw, in repentance, on the word of God and the sacraments; as we do so, we give thanks for all that the ecumenical movement has achieved, we acknowledge our many failings and we pray the Lord of the Church that He will commit us to a dynamic fellowship with Him and with all men towards the final fellowship of His Kingdom.

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